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ABSTRACT

Many problems plague denominational colleges. This paper explores the question: "what will be lost to American society and the churches if church-related colleges sever their denominational ties?" Church-related colleges find themselves caught between the remnants of their secular past and the demands of their public present. This has lead to a crisis of identity in most church colleges; and yet it is only when a college asks how it can use its resources for the common good, and when it involves the whole college community in the answer to this question, that the college can move to a deeper faithfulness to its Christian heritage. Increased federal and state support for higher education and the great expansion of public education have also contributed to the crisis. To preserve the diversity and independence of higher education in this country it is vital that churches continue to exercise a countervailing power against state-supported higher education. Church-related colleges must continue to serve the large number of students within the middle range of abilities and educate them for social involvement and sensitivity. These colleges can also undertake programs for the disadvantaged from all walks of life and educate people for a world of creative diversity. (AF)

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The Church-Related College in American Society

Charles S. McCoy

Sweeping changes have been taking place within American higher education over the past century. In addition to enormous growth, democratization, expanding scope of studies, specialization, the development of fantastic power and technology, increasing importance of higher education in shaping society, and tremendous expansion of funding for research, there has also been a great educational tilt toward public colleges and universities and away from private and church-related higher education. This latter shift especially has resulted in widespread unease and anxiety about the colleges sponsored by churches. What roles and functions are appropriate to them in this age of the public college and federal-grant university? Do they have a future? Should the relation between church and college be severed? These are some of the questions around which the current unease and anxiety gather.

The concern is partly over quality, partly over the mounting difficulties encountered in financing all non-public colleges in a time of rapidly increasing educational costs, partly over what purposes church-related colleges ought to serve and in what directions they ought to move. In the face of the intense anxiety and, indeed, the problematic character of the entire relation of the churches to higher education, Merrimon Cuninggim's comment of a few years ago appears as a studied understatement: "Protestant efforts in higher education are in a state of considerable disrepair." Nor are Roman Catholic affairs in better condition.

The painful fact is that church-related higher education has been undergoing significant changes in its internal structure, in its constituencies, in its pattern of funding, in its relations with church agencies, and in the functions which it serves. But it is not clear that the necessary rethinking of its nature and purpose, based upon adequate policy research, has been going on in order to keep pace with the changes. As a result, despite encouraging signs here and there, it is not difficult to discover a pervasive

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uncertainty which easily becomes opportunism, manifestations of drift which frequently indicate loss of direction and coherent policy, and a mounting anxiety which threatens failure of nerve on the part of college administrations and church agencies alike.

It is not my purpose here to comment on all the varied problems which plague denominational colleges. I shall explore a single question: What will be lost to American society and the churches if church-related colleges sever their denominational ties? Obviously only a sketchy response even to this one question can be provided here. My remarks are intended to accomplish three purposes: 1) to provide insight into where the church-related colleges are at present; 2) to clear the air about the function of higher education viewed in Christian faith; and 3) to state several important reasons for maintaining ties between churches and colleges.

Church-related colleges can, I am convinced, contribute to a richer mix of diversity and function in American higher education. But there is no guarantee that all colleges sponsored by churches are capable of meeting these challenges. In what follows, therefore, I offer no blanket endorsement of church-related institutions. If they will engage in rethinking their roles at the most basic level of commitment, purpose, and social context, church-related colleges can move toward new self-understanding which will continue to make them too important to lose.

It is pointless to speak of what would be lost if colleges and churches severed relationships unless we have some understanding of the current state of affairs and its possibilities. Much of the current confusion rests upon historical illusion which distorts the vision of the internal dynamics of church-related colleges. Higher education sponsored by churches has an important role to play in a pluralistic and diversified scene of American colleges, universities, and specialized institutes. But this role must emerge from what church-related colleges actually are, not from romantic visions as represented in histories by old grads and in college catalogues.

Additional misunderstanding arises from the quest for some unique function which only church-related colleges can perform because of the Christian faith which informs their life. The search

for uniqueness is probably pursuing a will o' the wisp, certainly is questionable on educational grounds, and appears to me as a perversion of Christian faith. This quest must be discarded before it is possible to see the contributions of church-related colleges which we can ill-afford to lose.

Franklin Littell has remarked that "the major problem before the churches in America is the achievement of self-understanding." An important part of such self-understanding is an adequate view of the past; and in few areas are Christians plagued by more misunderstanding than in regard to the history of American higher education.

It is often said that higher education in the United States is the child of religion. This is probably true of the British colonies if one means that the founders of the early colleges were also active churchmen and Christian believers and that they assumed their continuity with the learning of European Christendom. Brubacher and Rudy are correct in saying that "the Christian tradition was the foundation-stone of the intellectual structure which was brought to the new world." But it is often mistakenly assumed on the basis that the colonial colleges emerged from religious motivation that the church-related campus of today stands in direct continuity with the colonial heritage which provided the foundation for American higher education. This is not precisely the case.

The colleges of the colonial period were the product of a societal effort to serve the welfare of the whole community. They were not church colleges in an exclusive sense. Frederick Rudolph writes:

Harvard, William and Mary, and Yale . . . were creatures as much of the state as of the established churches. . . . And whether they should be thought of as state colleges or as church colleges is a problem in semantics that is perhaps best resolved by calling them state-church colleges.

It would be better still to call them public Christian colleges in order to get away from the notion that institutional control by state and church prevailed. These colleges were established to serve the public interest as then conceived, to serve the common good, and to be involved with society and its problems by providing leaders.

Our present church-related colleges derive not from the colonial period but from the nineteenth century with its proliferation of sectarian colleges. Though it cannot be said of all church colleges founded in that century, most were founded to serve particular groups, to be what Jencks and Reisman call "special interest colleges." As the nineteenth century wore on, denominational colleges became increasingly defensive of sectarian viewpoints and doctrines. More and more they tended to protect and indoctrinate students in the faith and morals of a particular sect—the group, of course, which controlled the college and provided its leadership. To further protectionist purposes, the colleges were usually isolated from general societal influences.

Many college leaders today prefer to forget this past, or to interpret it through the exceptions which can be found, or through idealistic statements in charters, catalogues, and presidential addresses. These sources provide as inaccurate a picture of what was actually going on then as they do today. The colleges which survived the high mortality rate for the sectarian institutions, which proliferated without plan or control, are the church-related colleges of today. We shall lose more than we gain if we continue to obscure the past and its clues to the situation of church-sponsored higher education in the present.

Church-related colleges today find themselves in a difficult dilemma. They are caught between the remnants of their sectarian past and the demands of their public present. This dilemma has created a crisis of identity in most church colleges, a crisis which is a reflection of the uncertainty within the churches. On the one hand, there is a rush to repudiate the sectarian past without attempting to discover what in it may be worth building upon. On the other hand, there is a furious attempt to catch up with educational and technological change. Let's look at what we ought to drop and what we ought not to lose of this past.

One persistent echo of the sectarian past, the quest for uniqueness based upon Christian origins and sponsorship, usually arises more from pride than faith, more from concern for a good image than a desire to serve. It is sometimes phrased to promote snob appeal—the suggestion that church-related education produces *better* people, perhaps meaning more acculturated, white

Protestants and, by implication, more *successful* people. All in all, there is little reason to wonder at student rebellion against compulsory chapel and similar items on the college program. Students sense a contradiction between avowed Christian purpose and hidden goals of a less praiseworthy nature. They recognize that much of the college rulebook is aimed over their heads at parents, trustees, and influential publics.

Today there is much talk of the Church as servant. But servanthood is practiced all too seldom. Here, as elsewhere, there is a gap between the image projected and the operational reality—a credibility gap most apparent to students but visible to outsiders as well. I stated previously that the dilemma of the church college may be seen as its sectarian past versus a public present. The dilemma might be equally well stated as protectionist pride versus open servanthood. In this perspective, it becomes clear that the quest for uniqueness, beyond being illusory, may actually subvert Christian purposes. The more the church-related college strives for an ephemeral distinctiveness, the more it will be tempted to deny the claims of Christian faith upon it—claims which require policy research and action on behalf of a more humane society.

In the latter part of his *Church Dogmatics*, Karl Barth talks about the meaning of the Christian community as it exists within the world. Rather than following the usual view which sees church and world as opposing entities, Barth holds that the Christian community knows itself through Jesus Christ to be in solidarity with the world and responsible for humanity. Pride leads us to affirm a chasm between church and world. Christian faith confesses our solidarity with the world and our responsibility for it.

Christian faith, I am convinced, leads the church-related college not to seek for an isolated uniqueness of function but rather to move toward solidarity with man and society, raising such questions as: *What is the common good?* and *How can we contribute to it?* The “common good” may be variously interpreted, and Christians should be contributing by specific actions and programs, rather than in a supposedly splendid isolation or in claims to special wisdom and goodness present only in church-related colleges.

Such a change of view, from pride to servanthood, from uniqueness to solidarity, from the pursuit of isolation to pursuit of the common good, may lead to greater freedom and pioneering on the part of church-related colleges. And, if this occurs, we may see public and private higher education beginning to emulate the church college. Some notable examples of this kind of imaginative innovation in church-related colleges come to mind at the University of the Pacific, at Florida Presbyterian, at Iowa Wesleyan, at the College of Wooster, and at the University of Evansville. Happily, the examples are increasing.

The shift may also solve the dilemmas of church-related higher education which have produced a crisis of identity in many institutions. When a particular college asks how—with its energies, constituency, and resources—may it contribute to the common good, then it may move toward the discovery of significant identity and purpose. If the answer to this question is sought, not only by a committee made up of the president and a few trustees, but within the entire college community—with faculty, students, alumni, and persons from the constituencies served—then new energies and resources may be tapped and a wider sense of community and purpose may come into being.

The way toward deeper faithfulness to our Christian heritage is to move beyond the residual images of the sectarian past with its quest for uniqueness, and seek ways toward greater solidarity with the society around and within the campus community. And a resolution of the crisis of identity requires study and action aimed at serving the public good.

At no point does the dilemma of the church-related college appear more sharply than when one considers the consequences of mounting support for higher education from state and federal governments. Some time during the nineteenth century, the United States embarked upon what must be called a "great experiment" in universal education. This experiment has proved to be of far-reaching significance for American society and for global culture. Our technological power and political dominance, as well as our tragic immaturity in world affairs, can in large measure be traced to this development.

It must be called the Great Experiment because no society in the short history of mankind had attempted it before. Previously, education beyond the most elementary levels had been reserved for special groups—for ecclesiastical, social, or intellectual elites. America decided to apply the same democratic tendencies inherent in our society since colonial days to the sphere of education. First, elementary education was extended and made virtually universal. Then secondary education was expanded and made available to all. And in this century, the same democratic notions have been applied to higher education. Because the resources were not available to churches and private institutions to carry out this far-reaching concept—and, indeed, much education had been designed to preserve aristocratic and ecclesiastical privilege—the state undertook the gigantic task of financing the Great Experiment.

As a result, our entire system of education has undergone sweeping changes. Rather than being controlled by local communities, schools have come under the increasing control of public agencies on the regional, state, and national levels. In elementary and secondary education, only the Roman Catholic Church has made extensive efforts to keep control of the educational process within a limited community, and this effort has met with declining success. On the level of higher education, the attempts of Protestants and Catholics to retain ecclesiastical control have weakened as the crisis of resources has relentlessly emerged.

Amazing consequences of the Great Experiment are already in evidence. More obvious changes are the tremendous growth in the educational establishment, the great increase in amounts expended on education, the tremendous growth in numbers of students at all levels, and the multiplication of functions performed by the educational systems. There are also less obvious changes. A vast reservoir of trained personnel has been available to undergird the expansion of American society. Never before has a social group taken possession of a wilderness, developed its industry, acquired a culture, and achieved global hegemony so rapidly as has the United States.

Technical mastery, advanced research, and mass-produced innovation have become the hallmarks of contemporary America.

Through our diversified educational system, we have tapped the abilities of middle and lower socio-economic groups largely excluded from opportunity and leadership in older systems. Paths have been opened to the "late bloomers" and to the socially disadvantaged. Where we are yet failing to absorb all potential resources, strong pressures to democratize further push us forward irresistibly. The G. I. Bill after World War II provided a giant step toward universal higher education, and programs to widen opportunities for the socially disadvantaged continue to multiply. So rapidly have we developed and such close continuity with Western culture have we maintained, that we usually forget that in the eyes of Europe we are an upstart civilization scarcely out of colonial and frontier conditions.

The massive shift from elite to democratic concepts of education and the launching of the Great Experiment in America have yielded enormous advantages for American society. But certain dangers have also accompanied the transition. We may put the change in another way: We have moved from a situation in which society—through various communities, local and intentional—was the sponsor of education to a situation in which the state is now dominant. The various components of American society, with all their diversity, once presided over the communication of our cultural tradition through control of the educational media. Now, increasingly, the state provides the context in which culture is communicated. This way of putting the matter suggests its more ominous possibilities. Sponsorship by the state may lead from dominance to control of education, and from control to totalitarian indoctrination.

This peril has been present for some time but has become more evident in recent years. It has caused concern on the part of social liberals. But one cause of the upsurge of the radical right today is opposition to the taking over by the state of the functions of communicating culture, functions previously controlled by various communities whether locally or ideologically, whether socially or religiously defined. When we consider ways in which public control of education has overcome parochial forms of discrimination and provided increased financing and quality, there is good reason to welcome the shift that has taken place. But

when one becomes aware of the possibilities of state control of educational processes, of indoctrinating the young in a nationalistic cultus which identifies patriotism with the endorsement of prevailing national policies, then one begins to recognize the perils implicit in the situation for traditional American freedoms—the right to dissent and the protection of minority points of view. Ecclesiastical authority was once the major threat to freedom of opinion and education. Today the state—whether through a narrow conception of police power or through the investigative authority of the F.B.I., whether through the force of available funds or the covert influences of the C.I.A.—has become the most significant threat to freedom and diversity in America.

The threat from the state to higher education is more from the distortion of purposes through funds eagerly sought by educators rather than from direct pressure. Nevertheless, it would be an incalculable loss if the churches ceased to exercise a countervailing power over against state-supported higher education. The issue is not merely that competition is good for educational business but that real limitation of the power and influence of state education is essential for our society. However, this counteraction must not be passive. Church-related higher education must search for ways to contribute creatively to the common good of our society and of mankind.

We need church-related colleges today to provide alternatives to the deadly tendencies toward educational sameness in a system of higher education which gives the appearance of great diversity. At the conclusion of a report on a spectrum of institutions, Warren Bryan Martin writes:

In the first chapter it was stated that whereas the diversity of form and function in higher education has been heretofore regarded as the chief distinguishing characteristic of the American system of education. . . . now, in the conclusions, it is necessary to acknowledge that there was no widespread evidence, in any of the prime interest groups at colleges in the Institutional Character study, of commitment to value diversity to the point that such differences would not only be tolerated but encouraged, could not only survive but actually prosper.

When tendencies toward bland imitation of other institutions, not only in curriculum but more basically in purposes and commitments, threaten excellence in education, then diversity in

control must be cultivated. Church-related colleges play a significant role within contemporary higher education by insuring the continuation of diversity. It is not necessary to have idealistic dreams about them or make spurious claims to uniqueness in order to affirm that cutting their church ties would eliminate a force making for diversity of values and commitments. As our society seems ever more intent upon inculcating narrow, chauvinistic values, such diversity must be prized even more highly.

The greatest enemy of education, as of democracy, is easy agreement and coerced consent. Diversity of viewpoint is essential in learning, and a clash of opinions is the core of education in critical thinking. Enforced orthodoxies may be memorized, but they do not educe innovative reflection. Consensual training, whether in a classroom on a campus or within an educational system, encourages rote learning, but only dissentious processes and conflicting perspectives lift learning above dull routine toward genuine education.

Despite the lessons of history and the insights of educational psychology, one still finds mediocre administrators and timid professors, threatened by controversy and fearful of dissent, striving to maintain false and therefore dangerous harmonies. Not only are unpopular opinions excluded because their presence might disturb wealthy constituencies, but differing perspectives are often excluded because insecure academicians feel inadequate in the presence of complexity.

Defense of diversity and dissent in the name of educational excellence must be made before every constituency from which a college hopes to receive support. Such defense need not be based on the liberal optimism that a free marketplace of viewpoints will inevitably produce truth. Instead, it might better be rooted in the Christian conviction that all power—whether in the realm of the physical or the realm of ideas—must be limited by counterpower, that partial views need the countervailing thrust of other views. Church-related colleges may enrich their own educational climate as well as serve a useful role in the wider context of American higher education by the cultivation of dissentious processes of learning and critical pluralism in societal values.

Though church-related and private institutions may perform this countervailing function by their very existence, they may find it possible to play an even more active and vital role. With their relative independence of pressures from political bodies, these colleges may find new educational patterns in which to serve as pioneers for the larger community of higher education. Moving creatively beyond the isomorphic tendencies present in both public and non-public higher education, Florida Presbyterian College blazed trails in interdisciplinary curriculum construction and in classroom design. In similar fashion, Lewis and Clark College developed innovatively a program in international education, preparing students better for living in our multi-cultured world.

James Perkins has observed that the rigidity into which German and English patterns of higher education have fallen during this century has inhibited continuing creativity within those European systems. They "are now frozen in the organizational concrete of the German institute and the English college. Now that German, and particularly English, social and economic development both demand and need new and more rounded orientation in higher education, the universities face a major upheaval if they are to respond." Quite clearly, parallel dangers exist at present in American higher education. If we are to escape ossification, then it is necessary for colleges and universities to move quite self-consciously beyond isomorphism and conformity.

By being different, church-related colleges are performing a needed function. These differences will be even more significant if these colleges continue to draw on the resources of the Judeo-Christian faith in order to discover needs in society and to move creatively in response. Technological innovations will probably occur in the well-financed laboratories of the federal-grant universities, but sensitivity to social injustice and striving to make the world more fit for human habitation are areas in which church colleges can join with concerned persons in public and private institutions.

Academic excellence is not enough today. If all colleges attempt to become instant Harvards or creeping Carletons, then the competition for the "best" students and the donors for such education will be won only by the swift and the suave. There are other needs which church-related colleges are meeting and areas into which they might move. In so doing, they will meet important needs other than sheer excellence.

More attention must be given in American education to the large number of students who fall in the middle range of abilities. By circumstance, more than by choice, church-related colleges have in fact been serving this group. The importance of these persons for the quality of society has been vastly underestimated. To educate them for social sensitivity and involvement has potentialities only beginning to be realized. In a democratic society, social change depends not only on innovative leadership but on an electorate prepared to support it. Colleges which have programs in urban studies, in black education, in ecology, and in social change, and which engage students with actual situations and train them in the realities of politics are contributing to a better world.

There is also the group in American society who are now in their late thirties or early forties and who therefore missed out on the expansion of higher education in the 1950's. Persons in this category are often trapped in deadend occupations and suffer great frustration as a result. They are the bitter supporters of right-wing political figures. They support repressive police power and the prevention of dissent. Church-related colleges, because of their close community involvements, can and often are undertaking programs for this disadvantaged group.

Recruiting from minority groups expands the ability of higher education to respond to demands for greater equality. Some colleges are finding opportunities for community education and student learning in the societal division over Viet Nam, in urban renewal, and in international education.

Church-related colleges can transform the tradition of social concern into involvement with the social policy of their regions. These colleges are already providing an essential function through educating future leaders in society. Involvement of the present

leadership in consideration of issues relating to the welfare of the community is a step which colleges are often making and could easily make. One college, faced with the possibility of moving to another city because of an economic depression where it was located, decided instead to aid the local industry and civic leaders in working for economic recovery. The effort was successful and the college grew with the community, receiving greater support and acceptance.

Not all church-related colleges are exercising their power in the area of social change and social policy. But it would be a distinct loss if the churches did not support these colleges to use their strategic locations in communities across the nation to educate students and societal leaders for responsible roles in humanizing the environment.

For the most part, education related to churches in this country has been sectarian and divisive in its effect. The church college has not, until recently, been an exception. But the pressures of the public present in higher education and the pull of the ecumenical future in interchurch relations have had sweeping influence upon most sectors of life and program in institutions sponsored by churches. Write Patillo and Mackenzie:

People who think that rigid sectarianism is the principal defect of church-related higher education are 50 years behind the times.

We are in a new situation in world culture, one which offers the possibilities for contributions to education from church colleges emerging from their sectarian past and denominational relationships. As we move into an era when education for ecumenicity is needed, we must not lose the relationship to particular ecclesiastical communities which is enriching educational preparation for living in a world of diversity.

The ecumenical movement among various Christian groups today points to a wider phenomenon which is a controlling characteristic of the contemporary world. Human society has been divided into widely divergent communities of interpretation as far back as we can trace man's history. Man has worshipped different gods, understood his world in diverse ways, regarded his fellow humans in various perspectives, and ordered his priorities around different purposes. Heretofore, men could live in

their communities relatively untouched by conflicting faiths except in times of upheaval or in cosmopolitan centers. Now the technological revolution in communications and travel brings all communities of interpretation into close confrontation within the global marketplace. Education for dividedness is no longer education for living in *this* world. We must be prepared not only for ecumenicity but for living in the global marketplace of conflicting faiths and life-styles.

Church-related education, to the extent that it can escape the confines of a sectarian past, is in an excellent position to educate for a world of creative diversity. This can be done by recognizing and lifting to a level of careful examination the religious and national variety of our world, by providing direct experience with different cultural and ethnic orientations, and by cultivating an educational process inclusive of multiple faith perspectives.

Cultural and international studies can contribute to such education, as can programs which take students off campus into study abroad and into cities, ghettos, and policy-shaping centers. But further, church colleges can enter into alliances with other denominational colleges for these programs. Both students and instructors will stand explicitly within particular faith contexts as they work and learn together. In this way, the sectarian past may contribute to rather than hamper education for ecumenicity and for participation in the global marketplace. What appears as a disadvantage may instead be utilized to enhance education. For we do not exist in a world of non-faith, as the public arena would often lead us to pretend, but rather in a world of multiple, contending faiths within which we must learn to live.

Education of this kind will teach that we need not fear those of different faiths but can, instead, learn from them in ways which will enrich our own faith and our life together. We educate in such a context not for a dividedness which no longer really exists but for creative diversity in a global culture.

As sectarian fears have declined and the diversity of the public present has become clear, many church-related colleges have already moved into varieties of consortia with other denominational institutions—to share teaching resources, to engage in

joint programs abroad or in urban settings, for student exchange programs; for shared facilities in libraries, science laboratories, and computer equipment. Models for cooperation are proliferating. It would be a serious loss to the American educational system if the contribution presently being made, and that which is potential, within the close cooperation of college and church were abandoned.

Probably the greatest loss, if the ties between college and church were severed, would be sustained by the churches; but this loss to the churches would also be detrimental to American society. To put it another way, one of the most important contributions which church-related colleges make to society is indirectly through the churches by which they are sponsored. Quite clearly, this indirect contribution of higher education to society through the churches is and can be made also by public colleges and universities; but the closer the relation, provided it is not one of control on one side or the other, the greater the possibilities of usefulness.

One clarification is in order at this point, one which applies to all that has been said about the contribution of church-related colleges to society. Many hold, either by intention or through inadvertence, that the purpose of religion is to serve and enhance the society of which it is a part. In particular, a criterion often applied to Christianity in the United States is its usefulness to American society. Some would even deny to the churches the right to be critical of national policies and goals. Let me dissociate myself from these and similar views. While it is true that religion does serve to bind personal, social, and cultural action systems into a whole, it also provides both the legitimation of and critical perspective upon the value structure and goals of these systems. The Judeo-Christian heritage and the institutions in American society which purport to embody that heritage have contributed much to that society and will continue to do so, but they do not exist *in order to* serve that society. The purposes which they serve are rooted in a wider reality than is encompassed in any one society, and the faith which empowers that heritage is constantly transcending the values of every particular special group. Those who would judge churches by their contribution

to the national values and purposes betray that heritage and announce their real religion to be nationalism. We may push the point even further and assert that the most important contribution which churches make to American society is through their critique of cultural norms. Such a critique impels a society toward the continuing change and permanent revolution essential to its development.

Though churches have often served to endorse the *status quo*, minorities inspired by Judeo-Christian faith have provided continuing and crucial sources of protest, criticism, and change in the United States. The decade now closing is no exception.

In this era of increasing complexity and rapidly developing technology, churches and churchmen need more than devotion and commitment in order to take action on behalf of change which will make the world more human. The church-related college is increasingly becoming a resource for churches as they seek to engage society on its creative edge of change. Father John Walsh has stated it this way: "To think of the Catholic university as an instrument of the Church for the carrying out of its *teaching* mission leads, I think, both to serious misunderstanding of the Church's teaching mission in itself and to profound distortions of the nature of a university. . . . It appears to me that the generic relationship between the Church and the Catholic university is one of the manifestations--perhaps the highest formal, explicit, and systematic manifestation--of the Church *learning*."

To the extent that the churches take seriously their mission to be agents of criticism and change in American society, they must enter into the realm of policy research and social policy development. In the modern world, policy inquiry and action cannot be carried out either exclusively or even primarily by clergy. Nor is it sufficient to talk of the ministry of the laity. Rather, policy inquiry and action require the ministry of churchmen in sectors of society where they are not laymen but experts and responsible for policy decisions.

Churches must have close ties with higher education if the resources of new knowledge and skills are to shape the ministries which the contemporary world requires. No longer is it possible

to rely on catechetical classes and Sunday schools—and it was probably never either wise or possible—for the preparation of ministers, lay and clerical, for the diverse needs of society. Colleges and universities—church-sponsored, private, and public—are required for the enormous and varied challenges of ministry in our complex and changing world. Two functions, at least, are essential: first, to educate youth who have some grasp of contemporary society and culture and who therefore have the potential for leadership in ministry; and second, to provide the technical knowledge and expert skills required for ministry. This is no time for cutting ties between churches and colleges!

Social policy requires the uniting of commitment, knowledge, and the power of decision. Let us not underestimate the contribution which churches as communities of faith and action can make to the humanization of society, but let us not deceive ourselves into believing that ministry can be carried out apart from the training and skills which higher education offers.

Such a view has implications for the relation of church agencies to church-sponsored colleges. The older attempts at sectarian control, which in most cases are no longer possible, must be abandoned. Colleges will be useful to churches only as they participate in the marketplace of academic freedom and performance. Nor should funds from church agencies be allocated without carefully-ordered priorities to any college bearing the denominational name. Instead, church agencies ought to use their financial resources: 1) to provide basic academic strength, 2) to encourage joint planning and action with other colleges in order to strengthen the educational process, 3) to provide for development of programs which prepare youth to become sensitive and experienced agents of change whether their ministries will be in ecclesiastical or public positions, and 4) to encourage the development of social policy education which will provide resources for churches and public groups in understanding the needs of man today and taking action to improve the human lot.

The task of the churches in higher education has not been completed. Many contributions are yet to be made. If colleges and churches sever their ties, what will be lost is not the past or the present but the future.